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CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIRST MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 19 February 1970, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

(Previous verbatim records in this series appeared under the symbols ENDC/PV.1-ENDC/PV.430).

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PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Argentina:	Mr. C. ORTIZ de ROZAS
	Mr. V.E. BERASATEGUI
Brazil:	Mr. R.E. SARAIVA GUERREIRO
	Mr. P. CABRAL de MELLO
	Mr. E. HERMANNY
Bulgaria:	Mr. K. CHRISTOV
	Mr. D. STAMBOLIEV
	Mr. I. PEINIRDJIEV
Burma:	U CHIT MYAING
	U MAUNG MAUNG GYI
Canada:	Mr. G. IGNATIEFF
	Mr. R.W. CLARK
	Mr. J.R. MORDEN
Czechoslovakia:	Mr. T. LAHODA
	Mr. J. STRUCKA
Ethiopia:	Mr. A. ZELLEKE
Hungary:	Mr. I. KOMIVES
	Mr. J. PETRAN
India:	Mr. M.A. HUSAIN
	Mr. N. KRISHNAN
	Mr. K.P. JAIN
Italy:	Mr. R. CARACCIOLO
	Mr. F.L. OTTIERI
	Mr. R. BORSARELLI
	Mr. U. PESTALOZZA

Japan:	Mr. I. ABE
	Mr. H. OTSUKA
	Mr. Y. TSUZUKI
	Mr. J. SAKAMOTO
Mexico:	Mr. A. GARCIA ROBLES
	Mr. M. TELLO
Mongolia:	Mr. D. ERDENBILEG
	Mr. Z. ERENDO
Morocco:	Mr. M.A.A. KHATTABI
	Mr. M.H. MASSAR
Netherlands:	Mr. H.F. ESCHAUZIER
	Mr. E. BOS
Nigeria:	Mr. C.O. HOLLIST
Pakistan:	Mr. K. AHMED
	Mr. S.A.D. BUKHARI
	Mr. T.O. HYDER
Poland:	Mr. W. NATORF
	Mr. K. ZYBYLSKI
	Mr. H. STEPOSZ
	Mr. R. WLAZLO
Romania:	Mr. I. DATCU
	Mr. O. IONESCO
	Mr. V. PARASCHIV
	Mr. C. GEORGESCO
Sweden:	Mrs. A. MYRDAL
	Mr. A. EDELSTAM
	Mr. O. DAHLEN
	Mr. R. BOMAN

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:	Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN
	Mr. V.V. SHOUSTOV
	Mr. L.A. MASTERKOV
	Mr. V.B. TOULINOV
United Arab Republic:	Mr. H. KHALLAF
	Mr. O. SIRRY
	Mr. Y. RIZK
	Mr. M. ISMAIL
United Kingdom:	Lord CHALFONT
	Mr. I.F. PORTER
	Mr. W.N. HILLIER-FRY
	Mr. R.W. RENWICK
United States of America:	Mr. J.F. LEONARD
	Mr. A.F. NEIDLE
	Mr. W. GIVAN
	Mr. R.L. McCORMACK
Yugoslavia:	Mr. M. BOZINOVIC
	Mr. M. VUKOVIC
Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General:	Mr. W. EPSTEIN

1. The CHAIRMAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translation from Russian): I declare open the 451st plenary meeting of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.

2. Lord CHALFONT (United Kingdom): May I begin, Mr. Chairman, by thanking you and other representatives who were kind enough to welcome me back in Geneva at our opening meeting on Tuesday? It gives me very great pleasure to be back here; and I should like, in turn, to welcome those representatives who are taking part in our deliberations for the first time -- the representative of Brazil, Ambassador Guerreiro; the representative of Japan, Ambassador Abe; the representative of Mongolia, Ambassador Erdenbileg; the representative of Poland, Ambassador Natorf, and the representative of Romania, Ambassador Datcu. For other reasons I am delighted to see many old friends around the table, and perhaps the others of them will not mind if I single out especially Mr. William Epstein, who in this particular session is acting as Special Representative of the Secretary-General in our Committee.

3. We are beginning a session in which I believe there are real possibilities for progress in disarmament and arms control. In saying that I have especially in mind the words addressed to us yesterday by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. We all appreciate the fact that he decided to mark the start of the Disarmament Decade and the enlargement of our Committee on Disarmament by coming here to speak to us; and like all my colleagues here I listened with great attention to his words of exhortation and encouragement yesterday. It is right that we should be reminded in this signal way of our responsibilities; and let me say at once that we acknowledge these responsibilities and we shall respond, as I hope we have responded in the past, to the Secretary-General's appeal. We welcome the spirit which he evoked for the Disarmament Decade.

4. We represent here today a group of sovereign States. Although as a Committee we receive many helpful expressions of world opinion, including, of course, resolutions from the United Nations in New York, there is no one who can tell us how to control the powers and potentialities which are constantly being made available from scientific discovery. It is difficult, and indeed might even be dangerous, to try to put limitations on the scope of scientific investigation or to try to prevent the development of new discoveries, even though some of them may have a terrible potential for destruction.

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5. It is, however, for us in this Committee to define the rules and the restraints which will ensure that scientific advances are used for the benefit and not for the destruction of mankind. The first and most obvious example that springs to the mind is, of course, the power of the atom; but it is no longer alone. Developments in microbiology and chemistry which offer great benefits to mankind might also lead to the emergence of new and appalling weapons of mass destruction. And, of course, there are new environments opening up in space and, for example, in the Antarctic and in the ocean depths. We here in the Committee on Disarmament must formulate and exercise our own restraints; and it is a task which calls for a special kind of diplomacy with a practical and compelling aim. I am glad that the Secretary-General reminded us of the world-wide expectations which wait upon our deliberations, and I should like to state formally at this stage that Britain for her part will do all she can to make this Decade an outstanding one in the cause of arms control and disarmament.

6. In saying this I do not underestimate the size of the task we are setting ourselves. During the last decade we achieved the partial test-ban Treaty (ENDC/100/Rev.1), the Treaty on the peaceful uses of outer space (General Assembly resolution 2222 (XXI) and the non-proliferation Treaty (ENDC/226*). Elsewhere contributing greatly to this climate of restraint and progress in arms control, we had the Treaty of Tlatelolco (ENDC/186) in which the representative of Mexico played such a notable part. These are all fine achievements, and I for one am proud, as I imagine many others round this table are, to have been associated with them. Yet even more is going to be expected of us during the 1970s. To fulfil those expectations we must tackle the really difficult problems, we must try to crack the hard nuts; but while doing so I feel that we must not fail to seize every opportunity as it occurs, however marginal it may appear at first in the context of a wide aim such as general and complete disarmament. The sum total of what one might describe as secondary arms-control measures represents substantial progress towards this final goal.

7. Before I address myself to the work that lies before the Committee I should like to say a word about the national approach to arms and armed forces. We have heard a great deal about the vast sums of money that are being spent about the world on armaments and on armed forces, and I think it is perhaps worth pointing out to my colleagues the efforts that the British Government has made in recent years and is continuing to make

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to reduce the level of expenditure on defence in the United Kingdom. Currently the defence budget of my country is, at constant prices, about 12½ per cent lower than it was in 1964/65. As a proportion of our gross national product, which is a figure we have heard mentioned in other contexts, the defence budget has declined from a figure of 7 per cent, which was being planned back in 1964, to about 5 3/4 per cent at the present time. Moreover, the share of the total public expenditure going to defence has declined very significantly.

8. Obviously, limitations of national defence expenditure are a step in the right direction. They enable more of our national resources to be used on education, social welfare and so on. But they are, in my view, no substitute for measures of arms control and disarmament embodied in legal instruments with an international application.

9. The pattern of the 1970s is still far from clear, but we start this decade with what are undoubtedly the most important arms-control talks that have occurred since the Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee was set up. I am talking, of course, about the strategic arms limitation talks which are shortly to be resumed in Vienna between the United States and the Soviet Union. Those talks, although they are not taking place here, might well result in the most important advance in arms control of this decade. The problems under discussion between the Americans and Russians are, of course, by their very nature best dealt with bilaterally, and I recognize that the responsibility of the two participating Governments is primarily to their own people. However, I am sure they realize that they have a responsibility also to the whole world to do everything in their power to make the talks a success.

10. But it should not be forgotten that there are other aspects of arms control and disarmament which are better dealt with multilaterally; and we must make it clear that this Conference is, as Mr. Smith, the United States representative, said the other day: "the world's principal forum for multilateral negotiations on arms control and disarmament." (CCD/PV.449, para. 12). This is particularly true now that we have an enlarged and strengthened Committee. This Committee does not deal only with ancillary or subordinate matters: we have important and urgent work to do here. Just as the strategic arms limitation talks will, we hope, help to strengthen confidence between the two super-Powers, in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament too confidence can be built up between different parts of the world, and the tensions that are the underlying cause of armed conflict can be eased.

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11. Indeed, the strategic arms limitation talks themselves are an example of this. I have always considered that the success of the non-proliferation Treaty which we negotiated here depended to a large extent on the fulfilment of article VI of the Treaty, which called for further measures of disarmament. The opening of the strategic arms limitation talks is, in my view, a most important step in that direction. We now look forward to the coming into force of the non-proliferation Treaty early next month; and we also welcome the opening of talks on safeguards at the International Atomic Energy Agency board meeting this month. If we can get early agreement on procedures for the application of the safeguards required by article III, we shall have made a really concrete advance. These are all important developments, and I hope they will encourage those who are still making up their minds about signing or ratifying the non-proliferation Treaty.

12. Looking forward to the first year of the Disarmament Decade and to our work at this session, we in this delegation still consider a comprehensive test ban as one of our highest priorities. We have made proposals on that subject (ENDC/232) which remain on the table here; and it is also still our hope that all States will co-operate to the full in meeting the Secretary-General's request for information on the seismic data which can be exchanged internationally. We should like to see early progress on the subject of peaceful nuclear explosions, and we welcome the reopening of discussions between the United States and the Soviet Union on that subject last week in Moscow.

13. In his speech yesterday the Secretary-General suggested an addition to our agenda, saying that the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament might perhaps consider the possible military applications of the gas centrifuge method of producing enriched uranium (CCD/PV.450, para. 19). As the Conference will know, that subject is of special interest to my Government, as the United Kingdom, together with the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany, has negotiated an agreement to collaborate in the development and exploitation of this process. We hope that this agreement will be signed very soon.

14. We all know that this process can be used to produce material for nuclear weapons, but it is not unique in that: a nuclear reactor can be used for that purpose also. That is why we all attach such importance to the non-proliferation Treaty and to the negotiation by States which are parties to it of agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency for the effective verification of their obligation under the Treaty.

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My view is that the right place to discuss safeguards is Vienna, and I fear that it might be an unwise precedent for this Conference to discuss one particular aspect of nuclear technology in isolation. Perhaps I might add that the three Governments -- my own and the Governments of the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany -- believe that their collaboration in this field will make a substantial contribution not only to the development of the peaceful uses of atomic energy but also to the cause of non-proliferation. International collaboration on the process in itself makes it unlikely that it could be used in such a way as to encourage the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

15. Perhaps I might now take up a point made by my colleague, Mr. Smith, in his statement on Tuesday (CCD/PV.449, paras. 35, 36) and then again by Mrs. Myrdal yesterday (CCD/PV.450, paras. 55, 56), when they referred to the urgent need to consider the problems of conventional arms, and say that the British Government also is ready to work with all countries to encourage international agreement on regional arms limitations. We would welcome international agreement on effective measures to control the arms trade, and for some time we have been studying the problems involved and the best way to make progress. In our view the primary requirement for the implementation of an effective international agreement is the active support of all the major supplying countries; although, of course, the attitude of recipient countries is a key factor as well. Although experience in the past has shown us that an effective agreement on the arms trade may be very difficult to reach, I hope that this problem will not be neglected during this coming decade.

16. I should also like to say a few brief words about the sea-bed treaty. We have before us the text of the draft treaty presented by the co-Chairmen on 30 October last (CCD/269/Rev.1), together with several proposals, including some made by my own delegation. In fact I believe we now have the ingredients necessary to complete our work, and it is my hope that we shall be able to reach agreement on a final text before the end of the present session. I do not wish today to go into the details of our own views, but I should like to remind my colleagues of my proposals of 21 October 1969 in Geneva (CCD/PV.444, paras. 68-79) and of 19 November 1969 in New York (A/C.1/PV.1694, provisional, pp.23 et seq.).

17. The second main subject of importance which we have before us in the form of concrete proposals is that of chemical and biological warfare, and I should like to think that here, too, we can make real progress during the first year of the Disarmament

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Decade. In spite of the General Assembly resolution of December 1966 (2162 B (XXI); ENDC/185), I think it is true to say that there was comparatively little interest in this particular field of arms control at that time; but the Secretary-General referred to it during an earlier visit to Geneva in 1968, and a few days later the United Kingdom Government put forward certain proposals in this Committee (ENDC/231*). This led to the suggestion that the Secretary-General should be asked to prepare an experts' report on chemical and biological weapons and the effects of their possible use; and this most valuable report (A/7575), published at the beginning of July 1969, has undoubtedly had the effect of focusing attention on chemical and biological warfare here, in the United Nations and in the world at large.

18. The United Kingdom has given most serious consideration to the problems connected with chemical and biological warfare. As the Committee knows, we have concluded that the most promising way of making early progress is to work for a separate agreement providing for the prohibition of biological methods of warfare and the destruction of biological agents and ancillary equipment. Even so, it was not easy to formulate the provisions of a possible international agreement; and we have been much encouraged by the compliments of some of my colleagues on the draft convention which we eventually presented to the Committee (ENDC/255/Rev.1). I know, however, -- this became very clear both here and in New York -- that it is the wish of many members of this Committee to discuss the prospects of progress on chemical and biological warfare together; and I said in the United Nations that we were ready to fall in with the wish of the majority. I hope that the considerable expertise that we have acquired in this field as a result of our special studies over the last two years will be of use to the Committee. It will certainly be at their disposal.

19. A most important development in this field which I have already welcomed elsewhere is, of course, the decision of the President of the United States to submit the 1925 Geneva Protocol (A/7575, p. 117) to Congress for ratification, to renounce unilaterally the possession of biological weapons and to destroy stockpiles of those weapons. I warmly welcome this imaginative and courageous step, which constitutes a positive act of disarmament -- the actual destruction of weapons of war. It is an act of the kind which we are all working to achieve, and one which, in the field of biological weapons, our draft convention would provide for under international agreement. I

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hope that the example that has been set will be followed by other governments and that it will give impetus to our efforts to add an important measure of arms control and disarmament to the achievements of this Committee.

20. Finally, I should like to say a few words about the answer given in the United Kingdom Parliament by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary on 2 February on the scope of the Geneva Protocol as regards the use of tear gas in war. If any members of the Committee would like to have copies of the actual answer which he gave in Parliament, my delegation can provide these. What Mr. Stewart did was to reaffirm the British Government's position as stated in 1930 that "tear gases and shells producing poisonous fumes are ... prohibited under the Protocol". But he went on to say that modern technology has developed CS smoke which, unlike the tear gases available in the 1930s, is not considered to be significantly harmful to man in other than wholly exceptional circumstances and that, accordingly, we regard CS and other such gases as being outside the scope of the Geneva Protocol.

21. We gave long and detailed consideration to this matter in view of the very wide interest which was displayed at the last summer session of this Committee as regards the scope of the Geneva Protocol. The use of such substances as CS, if British troops were ever called upon to use them in war, would provide opportunities to save lives and not to kill, particularly when innocent civilians may be involved. They would not, so far as we are concerned, be used in a manner inconsistent with the generally-accepted rules of war. It would be shortsighted, in our view, to deny armed forces the use in war of perhaps the only non-lethal weapon in their armoury and thus to compel the use in certain circumstances of more drastic measures. Now I know that the use of tear gas is at present very much in the minds of everyone concerned with arms control and disarmament; but I believe that the Committee would be doing itself a disservice if it devoted time and attention to seeking to outlaw a substance like CS at the expense of concentrating on the whole range of lethal weapons of war in national arsenals.

22. I have not put forward today any specific proposals on the matters which are currently before the Committee, but I look forward to doing so at a later date. I have been mainly concerned to speak in support of the message of encouragement given to us yesterday by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. His presence here marked the beginning of the world's first Disarmament Decade, and it is now our task to see that we live up to the high expectations that have been raised.

23. Mr. ESCHAUZIER (Netherlands): I would like to seize this opportunity to put on record that I associate myself entirely with the remarks of Lord Chalfont on the question of the production of enriched uranium by the method of ultra-centrifuge. I also wish to assert that the tripartite efforts of the Governments of the United Kingdom, the German Federal Republic and the Netherlands to seek new methods of enriching uranium have been prompted to a large extent by the desire to guard against a possible shortage in the future of enriched uranium if and when the need for enriched uranium for peaceful uses in reactors becomes more pressing.

24. To the extent to which the facilities connected with the ultra-centrifuge process will be located on the territory of the Euratom countries -- in other words, in the Netherlands -- they will be covered by the Euratom safeguards system; and it goes without saying that in due course they will also be subject to verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency under article III of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (ENDC/226*).

25. Once again, therefore, I want to say that I fully share the opinion of Lord Chalfont -- and in parenthesis I wish to say that I fully respect and understand the concern of the Secretary-General in this respect -- that this subject is simply a matter of safeguards arising under the non-proliferation Treaty, and that for the moment I do not see any need to discuss this problem in our Committee.

The Conference decided to issue the following communiqué:

"The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament today held its 451st plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador A.A. Roshchin, representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

"Statements were made by the representatives of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 24 February 1970, at 10.30 a.m."

The meeting rose at 11.5 a.m.